BURNS & CO. LIMITED--ITS FOUNDER AND EARLY HISTORY

The vitality of Canada's business organizations has been responsible, in a large degree, for the enviable national position the Dominion holds in a world at peace or a world at war. That vitality, which has enabled Canadian business to weather the storms, has been due largely if not wholly, to the ability, foresight, initiative and experience of outstanding men, who, in many instances, founded these successful enterprises and operated them with the co-operation and capable assistance of associates with whom they surrounded themselves. And so it was, and is, with Burns & Co. Limited, a Company which, from the days of its inception, has reflected the personality and accomplishments of its founder, the late Senator Patrick Burns.

There was a striking resemblance between the introductions to the meat business of Senator Burns and the late president and founder of a great American company which bears an international name. The American borrowed $10, bought a heifer and sold the meat in his home town of Barnstable, Vermont. Pat Burns acquired two steers as part of his winter's wages in a lumber woods more than 60 years ago, and the profit produced by these two animals started him towards the career which made him not only a world-wide figure, but which also proved him to be a public benefactor both as an employer of hundreds of men and women and as a large-scale vendor of pure, health-giving foods.

A native of Oshawa, Ontario, born in 1856, and a son of Michael and Bridget Burns, (Irish), Mr. Burns, striking out from Kirkfield, Ontario, in 1878, took up a homestead near Minnedosa, Manitoba, declaring he was interested in the venture only until he could make sufficient to purchase a neat and cozy little Ontario farm. But something of the expanse of the west gripped his imagination it seems and he never returned. The wide sweeps of open prairies, rolling hills and unfailing streams feeding or being fed by the majestic lakes, breathed something of the greatness into his dreams and thence into his ambitions, activities, career and finally his industrial success.

Expansion! That has been the keynote of this achievement--a story as colourful as any western story ever told among the autumn-tinted hills around the campfire at twilight.

To the Senator, then the obscure Pat Burns, fell the distinction of being the first to ship livestock from the west to the eastern market. At that time, 1878, as a Manitoba homesteader, he decided to raise hogs and ship them to Ontario as an experiment and in this he obtained the co-operation of the railway. An arrangement was made because the railway did not know what would be a fair freight rate and Mr. Burns did not know exactly with what favor his prairie porkers would meet when viewed and examined by the hog fanciers in the east. It was agreed that Mr. Burns would ship his hogs east and if his venture did not net him a suitable profit, the railway would make a

rebate on the freight rate. No rebate was requested so it was taken for granted that the first livestock shipment from the west had not only met with favor but proved sufficiently remunerative to render unnecessary a request for more in the form of rebates.

It was in 1885, however, that Mr. Burns really began the business venture which has broadened out into Burns & Co. Limited and its allied companies. He had previously supplied beef to the railway construction camp of MacKenzie & Mann when that then infant organization built the Regina and Long Lake line and long stretches of the Canadian Pacific Railway main line. He had thoroughly tested the possibility of the meat business in Western Canada, and had begun preparations to meet the opportunity inevitably contingent upon the rapid development of the West which, chracteristically, he visualized. Thus Mr. Burns came to the west and, guided by that intuition and foresight which never failed him, he chose the then small hamlet of Calgary as the centre from which to emulate, in his business, the expansion of the West.

For some time, of course, railway camps supplied the greater portion of Mr. Burns' market, but he was sufficiently wise to realize that, ere long, the railway would be completed; there would be no more construction gangs and camps and his market would gradually disappear. This realization led to the establishment and development of the wholesale and retail units of operation.

Mr. Burns located his Head Office in a building which is still standing on Ninth Avenue opposite where the Palliser Hotel now stands. That was in 1890, and since then the business he founded has gone on expanding as described in subsequent chapters.

During the next forty-odd years, Mr. Burns not only sought opportunities, but created them. His were the conquests of the builder rather than the fortune hunter; the progressive optimist rather than the transgressing rival.

On his 75th birthday Mr. Burns was appointed and became a Canadian Senator, "Senator Patrick Burns." He had previously been created a Knight of St. Gregory, one of the oldest orders of chivalry in existence. Long before this, however, he who was, perhaps, the largest single raiser of cattle in the west, had received another tribute, the kind that came from the hearts of his friends, associates, and acquaintances--"Pat Burns, Canada's Cattle King," so named by the general opinion of an appreciative and whole-heartedly outspoken fellow citizenry which thus so eagerly reached to place upon the pinnacle of its estimation a man so worthy of its undenied yet undemonstrative admiration. His kindly nature, his appreciation of the wants and needs of others and his philanthropic deeds will long be remembered.